

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

May 1999

MAY HAPPENINGS

The May meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held at noon on Thursday, May 20 at the Kate Lobrano House, 108 Cue Street, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi.

Our speaker, Reverend Claude Howard Stone, Jr., grew up on Ship Island where his father was the lighthouse keeper from 1927 to 1955. He has written a delightful book *Recollections and Memories of a Lighthouse Family*. The Ship Island lighthouse burned in 1972 and is currently being rebuilt. We can expect some very interesting stories from this colorful period in Gulf Coast history.

Call 467-4090 for luncheon reservations at \$6.00. If you don't make your reservations early, we have to buy more than may be necessary "just in case". We will appreciate your cooperation in this.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We had a machine that we called a lawn mower, though the manufacturer labeled it a weed-eater. Regardless of the semantics, ingress and egress to Lobrano House have been maintained with the help of this machine until this week when it came unstrung and whacked its last grass blade.

Good neighbor Tim Kellar, Chancery Clerk at the courthouse across the street witnessed its pathetic dying efforts and the following morning he arrived bearing the gift of his own personal weed-eater.

Oh joy! I can now cut the grass again.

See President on page 3



A Latanier or Palmetto House
From *The St. Tammany Historical Society Gazette*

The Voyage of Le Marin

Part five of a 1999 series

We continue with selections from the ship's log of Le Marin, the vessel of Pierre Le Moyne Sieur d'Iberville, who led five ships to our shores in 1699. Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur d'Bienville, d'Iberville's brother, commanded La Badine.

In mid-March, the party, having left the large vessels at Ship Island, was traveling up the Mississippi River in long boats and canoes. We join them as the friendly Bayagoula Indians escort them to meet the Houmas Indians in their village.

Edith Back

On Friday the 19th, after having left our markings around, as we are in the habit of doing wherever we spend the night, we set foot aboard our boats in very early morning. The river winds around from east-northeast to west by north. The fog was so thick that we could not see an island about a league down the river from the country of the Houmas. Around ten o'clock we reached the river shore where the Houmas were awaiting us. We found the three headmen of their nation, who intoned a chant, holding a calumet in hand; they presented it first to our gentlemen to smoke, then to

the men. We left at about eleven o'clock with the savages for the villages; our party comprising Messsieurs d'Iberville, Sauvolle, Bienville, Father Anasthasius, and four Canadians. The way was difficult to negotiate; for the first league the cane growth was very thick, then we had to walk across water-covered ground for another half league, then across mountains of good heights and difficult of descent, being the while forced to step fast, so as not to lose sight of the savages, who let no obstacles bother them, being very good walkers.

Having reached a mountain within sight of the village we sat down to rest; we were all covered with perspiration, due to the heat and to the speed at which we had been walking. They gave us some smokes, and the one who had told us to stop ran ahead towards the village; he came back a while later, signaling that it was alright for us to go ahead.

We at once resumed our march. Having reached the first huts, and finding that it was raining, we sought shelter for a while. The rain having moderated, we entered the village and reaching the main plaza, we saw the three chiefs, who came forward toward its center, each carrying a cross in hand. They led us forward to the temple, because of the rain, and after having asked us to sit down on some matting, they invited to smoke; they then had some Indian wheat and some pumpkins brought over and invited us to eat, making us all the while, many protestations of friendship. Monsieur d'Iberville gave them some hatchets, some glass-beads, two shirts, a blanket, some knives, mirrors, awls and small bells, telling them that he would give them other things when they came over to his boat. Which they understood very well. They rose up to thank him, shouting three times Hou! Hou! Hou!, arms outstretched, a ceremonial they never dispense with when they give things to each other.

The chief distributed the presents thanking us in the name of them all.

The rain having stopped, matting was spread out on the ground nearest the chief's hut, where they had us smoke from time to time, and where they brought us things to eat. They neglected nothing to give us entertainment. They danced several dances, castanets in hand, the women and girls mixing with all the youths, the whole was arranged and executed according to customs and though they were savages it was all well done.

The evening shadows falling, they went into the chief's cabin where they planted a fagot of some day cane stock, and began to dance, keeping this up until midnight, and sharing smokes with us all the time, the chief

They danced several dances, castanets in hand, the women and girls mixing with all the youths. Though they were savages it was all well done.

keeping always to our sides. I had forgotten to state that on my having started to leave, at half past four, to go back to our quarters, they all came and fetched me back, holding my arm and insisting that I should stay, saying that I could not get back there before nightfall. Their village was, in fact, situated a good two or three leagues from the river.

On Saturday the 21st we wanted to leave that morning but they said that we should wait, that their women were pounding some millet for us, and that they would come down with us to the river shore as soon as they had finished their pounding of it. About that time several of our armed men came up, having felt worried about us.

We left around ten or eleven. On leaving the chief's cabin we fired five shots. On reaching the outskirts we fired another volley, and on reaching the hill, where we stopped to rest, we fired one more, of all our firearms that time.

The savages came down with us, accompanied by all their women; the latter were in tears of our leaving. We reached our shelters by half past one in the afternoon.

We told our people all that had transpired during the reception given us on the previous day. The savages offered some of their women to our gentlemen, the latter thanked them. It was a token of goodwill and friendship, and it served to emphasize the desire to conclude our alliance with them.

Two hours after reaching our cabins, their chief, with a goodly number of savages, came loaded down with Indian wheat, all prepared as before.

The chiefs, each carrying in hand a wooden cross, held march around the great cross that we had planted before, with a ceremonial procession, throwing tobacco over and around it, chanting the while in their own ways.

After they handed their calumets to our gentlemen; one of the head ones among them palavered with Monsieur d'Iberville for half an hour, we made it a point to look all attention., although none of us knew what he was talking about. All the youths danced by the fire of flaming torches, while they kept going until midnight, to the accompaniment of the noise made by two bits of wood which they continually kept beating, one against the other.

Towards evening Monsieur d'Iberville made them numerous presents, such as a fine scarlet cover embroidered all around, hatchets, knives, glass-beads, mirrors, and sundry other things; they thanked him in their own fashion; such as before described. They had, before that, made him a present of a quantity of bear and roebuck skins. Come the night, the head chief divided with the principals among his savages all the presents which had been given him by Monsieur d'Iberville.

During the night more than forty savages of both sexes went to their village to get some Indian wheat, together with a quantity of pumpkins, and some fowls, bringing the whole to us on the morrow.

From A Chapter from *Memoirs & Documents* by Pierre Margry. Translated by Henry de ville du Sinclair.

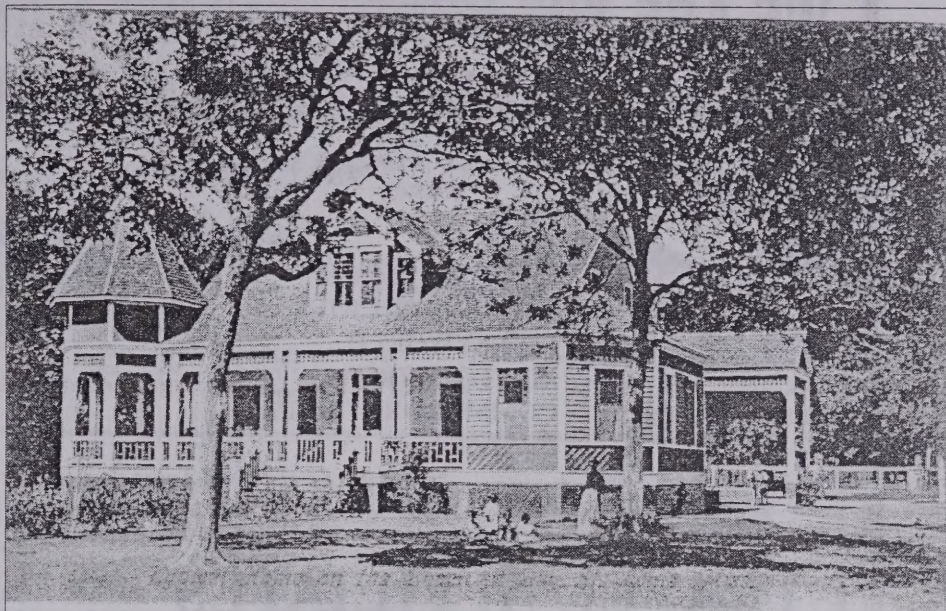
The Erosion of Indian Society

The ocean voyages between the "old" world and the "new" brought to this continent the ancestors of today's Mississippians. Whether our ancestors came from Europe, Africa, or Asia, free or slave, most of them still came from somewhere else. The arrival on this continent marked a decisive change in their lives as well as the lives of us, their descendants. But the arrival of the explorers and then settlers made an equally decisive impact on the complex societies of the Mississippi Indians. For these native Americans, contact with Spanish explorers and European diseases was a disaster which largely destroyed their population centers prior to contact by later settlers who wrote much of the early history of the region.

The downfall of the classical Mississippian Indian societies was largely unobserved and until recently not understood. Historian Patricia Galloway ...has provided a description of classical Mississippian society and explained the tragedy which accompanied contact with Europeans. In the disintegration of the larger population centers, there followed a complex pattern of population movement and amalgamation from which emerged the historically known and named Indian tribes of Mississippi.

Galloway describes the southeastern Indians as fortunate in not possessing obvious wealth in gold or other resources which attracted the massive European colonial effort in Hispaniola, Mexico, and Peru. As a result, the Indians of the southeast were able to adapt to their changed circumstances and begin exercising some degree of control over the economic and military competition between European powers. This degree of Indian control and adaptation did not begin to erode until the balance of population and military power shifted to the emerging dominant power in the southeast, the "American" nation.

From *Ethnic Heritage in Mississippi*, Edited by Barbara Carpenter, The University The University Press of Mississippi, 1992.



DO YOU KNOW THIS HOUSE?

Randy Randazzo of Arlington, Virginia has a wonderful collection of early post cards of the Gulf Coast. From time to time he has sent us copies of the ones in Hancock County. The above photo is marked "Typical Home on the Beach in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi." Note the turreted porch, the unusual four-window dormer on the roof and the bay window addition to the right side of the house. The house appears to have been a Creole cottage with central hall with the above mentioned addition.

(President from page 1)

Yvonne Ftizgerald donated a set of framed postcards of Bay Saint Louis to the Society. One is a view of Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church taken before the fire of 1907 completely destroyed it, and likewise a view of Saint Joseph's Academy before the fire. A third card shows both the new church building and the new academy building. There is also a card from 1908 showing the dedication of the bells for the church. The final photo is of the Main Street Methodist Church. We are appreciative of these wonderful pictures.

Charles Gray

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY	8 a.m.
through	to
FRIDAY	4 p.m.

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Publisher
Editor

Charles H. Gray
Edith Back

Published monthly by the

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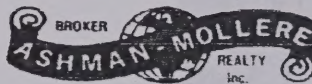
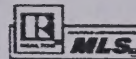
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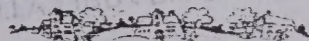
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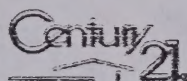
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
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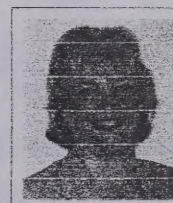
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


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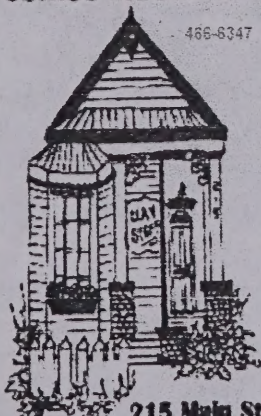
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